

★ HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE ★

**STATEMENT OF
GENERAL RALPH E. EBERHART, USAF
COMMANDER
NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND
AND
UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND

BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICE COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

MARCH 13, 2003

Chairman Hunter, Congressman Skelton and Members of the Committee:

It is an honor to appear before this Committee again, and to represent the outstanding men and women of North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). The soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, National Guardsmen, reservists and civilians serving in our Commands are truly the “best of the best,” and give our two great Nations—the United States and Canada—every reason to be proud.

NORAD

Our number one priority is to strengthen aerospace warning and control of United States and Canadian airspace. Prior to 11 September 2001, we focused on threats originating from outside North America. As a result of these terrorist attacks, we now also look for threats from within our borders.

Thanks in large part to the timely passage of the Fiscal Year 2002 Defense Emergency Response Fund, today we have connectivity with 70 Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) long-range interior en route radars, better ground-to-air communications, and a robust coordination capability to provide comprehensive coverage of our airspace.

Throughout this integration effort, the FAA has been very responsive to our requests for technical assistance. This strong partnership of dedicated people is committed to further improving our ability to protect the Nation’s airspace.

Operation NOBLE EAGLE. NORAD defends North America from domestic air threats through Operation NOBLE EAGLE. Across the United States and Canada, armed fighters are on alert and flying irregular combat air patrols to identify and intercept suspect aircraft. Since 11 September 2001, we have flown over 27,000 sorties to deter, prevent and defend against potential terrorist attacks, without a single mishap. This tremendous accomplishment is a tribute to the professionalism and perseverance of the men and women executing these missions.

In addition, we are supporting homeland defense operations with a layered air defense of the National Capital Region. We have developed new relationships across the Department of Defense (DoD) and with interagency partners to establish a comprehensive shield to guard our Nation’s capital.

To maintain our warfighting edge, we routinely exercise and evaluate our ability to defend against the full spectrum of air threats. United States’ and Canadian civil agencies continue to make air travel safer through increased airport and aircraft security measures. However, if called, we stand ready as the last line of defense against threats within our airspace.

North American Air Surveillance Plan. In our efforts to provide the best possible coverage of North America, we have teamed with the FAA and North American Air Surveillance Council to further enhance our wide-area surveillance capabilities. There has been an outstanding level of interagency

cooperation to develop a comprehensive North American Air Surveillance Plan that addresses our requirements to detect, identify and classify all aircraft within North American airspace. We look forward to fielding expanded capabilities that track even smaller, low-altitude threats.

NORAD'S RELATIONSHIPS

USNORTHCOM. NORAD and USNORTHCOM are two separate commands. Neither command is subordinate to the other or a part of the other, but we work very closely together. Members of the two commands work side-by-side within the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center and, in many cases, United States military members are dual-hatted in positions on both staffs.

Bi-National Planning Group. The Departments of Defense and State have been working with their counterparts in Canada to develop additional areas of cooperation to better protect our citizens. One promising outcome of this collaboration is an agreement to establish a Bi-National Planning Group for a two-year term.

This group will identify additional ways to protect our citizens and strengthen air, land and maritime defense of North America, while respecting the national interests and sovereignty of each nation. Members have already begun arriving and will be appended to NORAD.

USNORTHCOM

On 1 October 2002, the President established USNORTHCOM as a regional combatant command to provide "unity of command" for United States military actions that counter threats to our homeland from the air, land, or sea domain. We are just like the other regional combatant commands, with one important difference—the United States homeland is in our area of responsibility.

We conduct operations to deter, prevent, and defeat threats and aggression aimed at the United States, its territories and interests. We also provide military assistance to civil authorities, when directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense. When we work with civil authorities, we will most likely be in a support role to a lead federal agency, providing "one-stop shopping" for federal military assistance. The President's decision to establish USNORTHCOM has enhanced the DoD's ability to provide quick, responsive support, when and where needed.

Organization. USNORTHCOM has few permanently assigned forces. Whenever mission requirements dictate, we will request additional forces from the Secretary of Defense, and if approved, receive them from our force provider, United States Joint Forces Command. Our day-to-day operations are conducted by three subordinate commands:

- The Joint Force Headquarters—Homeland Security supports land and maritime defense planning for the continental United States, and provides military assistance to civil authorities.
- The Joint Task Force—Civil Support provides command and control of consequence management forces that respond to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosive events.
- The Joint Task Force-6 provides support to federal, state and local counterdrug law enforcement agencies.

Exercises. Over the past several months, we have trained and exercised with 55 federal, state and local agencies across a broad spectrum of scenarios. During UNIFIED DEFENSE 02-2 in September 2002, we validated our initial capability to command and control forces in response to future attacks. Most recently, in February 2003, we completed a second major exercise, UNIFIED DEFENSE 03-01, to strengthen the trusted relationships we need with interagency partners to defend our Nation's homeland.

Current Operations. We have demonstrated our ability to conduct operations in a number of emergency situations. During the Washington D.C. sniper attacks, we coordinated aerial surveillance for the Federal Bureau of Investigation's efforts. Most recently, we supported military operations in the aftermath of the Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy. As directed by the Secretary of Defense, we established a response task force to provide command and control for DoD resources and units, in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

We have also been called upon to conduct operations in support of pre-planned events. In October 2002, using forces provided by United States Pacific Command, we supported the President's attendance at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference in Los Cabos, Mexico. In January 2003, we provided command and control of all military support to the State of the Union Address, to include security, emergency medical, and chemical and biological response forces.

Emergency Preparedness and Response. We have the capability to assist local responders and lead federal agencies in their response to a bioterrorism incident. Although biohazard investigative expertise exists in most local and state health departments and in the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, these resources may become overwhelmed in emergency circumstances. When directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, we will provide bioterrorism experts to a lead federal agency to help prevent or contain a situation. Likewise, we are ready to provide field medical units, as well as logistics, transportation and security capabilities to assist federal, state and local agencies, as required.

USNORTHCOM'S CHALLENGES

Intelligence. Homeland defense relies on the sharing of actionable intelligence among the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies. Our Combined Intelligence and Fusion Center collates and analyzes data from the United States Intelligence Community and nearly 50 different government agencies. One of our greatest challenges lies in sifting through the volumes of intelligence and operational data from these sources. Our goal is to help connect the dots to create a clear threat picture, playing our appropriate military role as part of the interagency team. Another shared challenge is to overcome cultural and procedural differences among the DoD and other Departments for information that is collected, categorized, classified, analyzed and disseminated.

Homeland Command, Control and Communications. We need to be able to command and control forces and to coordinate planning and operations with agencies at the federal, state and local levels. Interoperable communication architectures and trusted information exchange environments provide the framework for coordinated operations. We have ongoing efforts with our homeland defense and civil support partners to upgrade existing architectures and to better integrate our information collection and exchange capabilities.

Ballistic Missile Defense. We are working with the Missile Defense Agency, United States Strategic Command and other combatant commands to develop the Concept of Operations that will ensure the United States has an effective missile defense capability by the fall of 2004.

Posse Comitatus. We will remain vigilant in ensuring that USNORTHCOM is used in accordance with the laws of our great Nation—respecting the rights and liberties of every American. We understand the Posse Comitatus Act and related laws and the clear limits placed on military support to civil law enforcement. We believe the Act, as amended, provides the authority we need to do our job, and no modification is needed at this time.

USNORTHCOM'S RELATIONSHIPS

Our Command is built upon a total force and total national team concept that includes members from all five Services, the National Guard, the Reserves, DoD Civilians and numerous federal, state, and local agencies. We believe we are redefining “jointness” by forming new partnerships within the DoD and with numerous civilian agencies, as well as strengthening existing ones. Developing these strong relationships is key to our success.

Department of Homeland Security. The Secretary of Defense will coordinate with the Secretary of Homeland Security on policy and resource issues. In accordance with decisions by the Secretary of Defense, we will work with various sectors of the Department of Homeland Security on operational planning, training and execution.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense (ASD(HD)). We have frequent interaction with Paul McHale on a broad range of issues. As ASD(HD), his principal duty is the overall supervision of the homeland defense activities of the DoD.

Other Combatant Commands. We have established a conceptual framework with Admiral Jim Ellis, Commander, United States Strategic Command; Admiral Ed Giambastiani, Commander, United States Joint Forces Command; and General Charlie Holland, Commander, United States Special Operations

Command to secure the homeland. We are also working closely with the regional combatant commanders to eliminate threats to our homeland from afar. Our focus is to address gaps in coverage and any overlapping responsibilities to ensure that we provide an integrated defense for our citizens at home and abroad.

National Guard. We have a close relationship with the National Guard Bureau, which is enhanced even more by having Major General Steve Blum, an Army National Guardsman, as our Chief of Staff. We believe that no force is better suited to help deter, prevent, and defeat many of the threats we face than today's National Guard. Through the National Guard Bureau, USNORTHCOM coordinates with state headquarters for planning purposes and maintains situational awareness of National Guard actions and commitments.

To support our missions of homeland defense and military assistance to civil authorities, we are looking at the feasibility of evolving the current mobilization process into something closer to the current air defense model used by the Air National Guard in support of NORAD's mission.

Specifically, Air National Guard fighter units of 1st Air Force have been successfully employing instantaneous Title 10 USC orders for several years. These orders allow an individual to volunteer, with consent of the Governor, to be federalized for specific missions prior to execution. We believe we can achieve a higher level of readiness if we apply the air defense mobilization model to the existing National Guard response forces, when needed in a federal capacity.

Coast Guard. Maritime Defense missions involve traditional military activities such as combat air patrols and naval operations within our area of responsibility. In these cases, we would take the lead and the Coast Guard would likely be called upon for support. It is important to note that the Coast Guard does not report to USNORTHCOM, although we do have several Coast Guardsmen on our staff, including Rear Admiral Jim Van Sice, who serves as our Deputy Director of Operations. The Coast Guard is in the Department of Homeland Security, and any requests for Coast Guard assistance to DoD would come from the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of Homeland Security.

By contrast, the Coast Guard would be the lead federal agency for maritime homeland security. When directed, we would support Coast Guard homeland security missions through our naval component commander. This support might include maritime air surveillance, the use of naval surface combatants with Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachments onboard, or the use of specialized DoD capabilities.

Interagency. We are leveraging the unique capabilities and expertise of federal, state and local agencies to protect our homeland. Our Joint Interagency Coordination Group is working to help synchronize interagency plans, exercises and operations. In addition, we have a growing number of liaison officers in our headquarters staff at Peterson AFB, to include the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the National Imagery and Mapping Administration.

POTENTIAL FUTURE CAPABILITIES AND MISSIONS FOR NORAD AND USNORTHCOM

We continue to address critical command and control challenges highlighted by the terrorist attacks on our homeland. We are committed to improving our situational awareness by developing a common operating picture for the air, land and maritime domains.

Combatant Commanders' Integrated Command and Control System. We are pursuing ways to leverage the Combatant Commanders' Integrated Command and Control System to modernize our aging 60's era air and missile warning systems and infrastructure. This will allow us to migrate to our next-generation Battle Control System and provide the foundation for a fully integrated NORAD-USNORTHCOM command and control capability.

Battle Control System. The upgraded Battle Control System will provide connectivity with a wide array of radars and sensors across North America, thereby giving our homeland a more integrated air defense capability. As future increments are fielded, we will be able to process air defense data faster, as well as improve our battlespace awareness.

High Altitude Airship (HAA) Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration. The Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Missile Defense Agency, the United States Army and NORAD are spearheading the effort to demonstrate the technical feasibility of an unmanned, untethered, long-duration HAA. The prototype airship will stay airborne for one month and carry a 4,000-pound

payload. We expect the objective HAA to have the capability to stay airborne for up to a year and carry a payload greater than 4,000 pounds. A robust HAA capability would give warfighters persistent wide-area surveillance of the battlespace against a full spectrum of air, land and sea threats.

Homeland Security Command and Control Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration.

USNORTHCOM is sponsoring this Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration to provide the DoD Homeland Security community with operationally relevant command and control capabilities. This initiative will help us rapidly insert mission-enhancing technologies and promote information sharing, collaboration and decision-making in a trusted information exchange environment.

CONCLUSION

We are grateful for everything the members of this committee have done to ensure our ability to defend our homeland. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 reflects your commitment to our mission, as well as to our servicemen and women, and we appreciate your continued support. With your help, our Nation will be safer tomorrow than it is today. I am honored to appear before you, and look forward to your questions.

House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515